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LETTER

TO

M^r THOMAS PIERCE RECTOR

OF

BRINGTON:

Containing amongst other things, a
Brief state of the Question about

Gods Decrees.

To which is annexed

An Exercitation in Latine

Concerning

F R E E-VV I L L.

By *Edward Bagshawe*, St. Ch. Ch.

L O N D O N,

Printed by *A. M.* in the Year, 1659.







FOR
M^r THOMAS PEIRCE,
RECTOR of BRINGTON.

S I R:

THe Dispute between your self and Me, is now become so Personal, and would be, if I should imitate your Style, so Passionate, that, till you can recover a calmer Temper, and quietly consider how little your wrath doth either advance Gods Honour, or your own, it is very requisite I should lay aside any farther handling of that weighty Question, which first engaged us: For as I ought to pity your weakness, and not pour strong liquor into so crazy a Vessel; so I ought likewise to have a greater regard unto those Sacred and amazing Truths, then to venture them upon that scorne which they are like to meet with, whilst you are in this your Fit of Anger and Impatience.

Yet, Sir, That I may for the future prevent your approaching so near to Blasphemy, as to charge, what ever Faults I either have been or may be guilty of, upon the account of my Principles (since I hold nothing, but what I solely derive from, and am alwaies ready to make good by, Scripture) I shall briefly discover what my Principles are; that so if ever you offend in the like kind of censure again, your Malice may then be as Apparent, and as Inexcusable, as now your folly is.

Therefore to undeceive you, I profess firmly to believe, with the rest of those Excellent Writers whom you have so disingeniously traduc'd, that, *God alone is to have the honour of all the good which his Creatures do*; But, *All the Guilt and shame of their Actions they are to take wholly unto themselves*;

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And

And, *That they ought to look no higher for a Cause of their de-
filement, then unto the impure Spring within them.*

How these two Positions of mine (which you must needs acknowledge very Pious, since, as I take it, they are yours too, though you inferre them from much different Principles) can consist with *Absolute Predestination*, is not my Business to resolve you, no more then it would be yours to explain and unfold all the Mysteries of the *Trinity* against the Cavils of a *Socinian*; For those who profess a strict adherence to the Letter, and, to their best understanding, the sense of Scripture, need not regard the Consequences which such vain Persons can urge against them; and amidst so many difficulties, more then you have yet alleadged, which my own Reason do's daily suggest to me, and sollicite me with, I have only this, with which I satisfy and quiet my Spirit, that I desire fully to acquiesce in the *revealed will* of God, and to be wise, as not above, so nor beside, *what is written.*

And therefore, Sir, If it should follow from this Tenet, not that I asseme, but that in some sense I cannot deny God to be the ~~Author~~ ^{Source} of *sinne*, You have as little reason to revile me for *Blasphemy* (since I do in my very thoughts abhorre it;) as I should have to reproach you with folly and weakness, for asserting *Conditionall Election*, though it be a thing not only utterly inferiour, but, in an Absolute and Independent Agent, impossible to be conceived: Yet since herein I believe you speak in the Integrity, as well as in the Simplicity of your Heart; I dare not charge upon you those odious Inferences, which I am able to deduce from that Doctrine.

So that when I first ventured to declare my own Opinion in those Points, and to write something against yours; I must Profess that it was not your Opinion (which, how irrational soever I think it, yet I know consistent with a Pious Life) that I was mainly concern'd against; but rather at your unjust and unhandsome confidence, whereby you was not only content to discover your own Judgment, (which yet is no more then to rake up and revive an almost decayed Er-
rour)

rou) but did proceed so virulently to asperse and censure all those who could not concur with you : This, Sir, did deserve, from every one that dissented from you, much sharper Language then I either then did, or now do, though provok'd, intend to use. For let your own Convictions, in this Point, be as great and as clear, as it is possible, yet why should you deny others that liberty, of abounding in their own sense, which you did so needlessly assume unto your self? Or, with what Colour of reason can you excuse your bitter investives at those Famous Pillars of the *Protestant Cause*, who, as they liv'd long before you, so, they writ nothing but what they thought evident and convincing Truth, and therefore could do nothing to provoke that usage? But had they been as really mistaken, as now by you they are only supposed to be ; it would have become your piety rather to have hid, then, herein exceeding the sin of *Cham*, first to uncover, and then to Proclaim their Nakedness.

And to make your Guilt herein a little more Black and Criminal, I must remind you, for your Passion hath spoil'd your Memory, that what those, our Primitive Worthies, maintain'd, was once the Uniforme and establish'd Doctrine of our Church, till some of your Party departed from it ; amongst whom none have done so desperately as your self, who seem to have cast off, not only all Filial and Pious esteem for those who deliver'd this Doctrine, but likewise all manner of Civility, as well as Charity, for us, who still retain it. Thus, Sir, you see I can easily justify my first Attempt, which was to set upon you as the common Enemy, and to do my part in striking at him, who had so boastingly defied and Challenged All ; But for the second, I mean, my mistaking you to be the Author of those *Reflections*, and my proceeding so sharply upon that mistake, I acknowledg it an Errour ; so that without daring to retract any thing in my *Narrative* (which I cannot do so long as I love Truth above all things) I heartily beg your pardon for the *Preface*.

I might alledg in my excuse, that common Fame did voice those *reflections* to be yours long before I saw them ;

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which thing alone, as I remember, in a Case of a much greater Man than you, * and by much wiser Persons than my self, was judged to be a sufficient ground of Acculation. But besides, I had the particular Testimony of a Friend of yours to Warrant me; to which I might add the likeness of the Style, and the unlikelyhood that any else, and unprovok'd too, should venture to defame me first, and then endeavour to confute me after (which is your known method of Arguing.) All these Circumstances agreeing, together with my never once looking upon the Title Page of that Book, but only reading so much as concerned me, might, if I would enlarge upon them, serve, if not to justify, yet, to extenuate my fault : For a Fault I am content to call it, and more I think you cannot make of it : Especially since it did not proceed from any *anger at my being neglected by you*, as you pleasantly insinuate (for this I could easily have interpreted to my advantage, and have concluded that you did not Answer me because you could not) much less was it any Malicious design against your fame or person, but meerly a mistake, grounded upon those Presumptions, which made me handle you, as I then thought you deserved, and that was very scurvily.

And had you been pleased, in your late Vindication, so far to have moderated your Choler, as meekly to have acquainted me with my Error, I should presently have made you an Acknowledgment, as Publick and as Humble, as your own Pride could wish; For I do not only knew it to be more Christian, but likewise hold it a more generous thing to ask Forgiveness, then to persist in an Injury. But in your last Pamphlet, you have made your self soliberal amends, and Carved out so much of my Reputation, where with to repair the Ruins of your own, that you have almost enforced me to forbear my Courtesie; since by your rude taxing me with want of *Modesty, Humanity, Religion, Conscience*, and what not? by your recharging upon me those very Crimes of *Treachery and Ingratitude* to Mr Busby (which every one but you think I have already sufficiently wip'd off.)

Yon

You have made that nameless, because worthless, Gentlemans *Reflections* your own, and so have given me a just occasion to abide by that Character which I have already made of you; and, instead of retracting any thing in the *Preface*, I might look upon it only as an Anticipated Revenge.

Yet, Sir, since you so perfectly disown the having any hand in the writing, of that unknowing and unknown *Apolo-gist*; and because much of what you say, is only *Responsum & non dictum*, not a beginning, but only a return of unkindness, it is fit that as I strook the first Blow, though ignorantly and in the dark, so, now you have open'd my eyes, I should first offer to shake hands, and not willfully prosecute what I unwittingly began.

I shall not therefore make any return to those many unhandsome expressions, wherein you have endeavoured to set me out; only give me leave a little to wonder at the largeness of your Talent, that after you had emptied such a Treasure of ill Language upon Mr. *Baxter*, and Mr. *Hickman*, you should still have a fresh Spring and reserve for me; and continue to raile in your last Page, with as good a grace as if you were but then beginning. This, Sir, as it shews the greatness of your stock, which can maintain you at so large an expence, and in so much fine variety of reproachfull sayings, so I am content to let it pass for your greatest commendation.

But, Sir, Had your expressions of me been much worse then they are, I was prepared to Forgive you, and now think my self obliged to thank you for them; since after so many Tragicall exclamations, wherein your Anger is more conspicuous then your Art; and after so scrupulous an enquiry into my life and manners, you can only accuse me of two things, *the mistake of my Preface*, and *my supposed Ingratitude to Mr. Busby*; of which if I can clear my self, you have done enough, as to all other things, to assert and to proclaim my Innocence. And for the *first* of these, I have already askt your Pardon; as for the *other*, I am sure I need none;

none; concerning which if my *Narrative* hath not already given you satisfaction, it is not because that is not clear and convincing enough, but because you came prepared to contradict it. And though you uncivilly, as meddling with a difference which concerns you not, bring Mr. *Busby* again upon the *Stage*, yet I will not now be provoked to say more of him then only this, that I am sorry I cannot say less then I have done.

I pass by therefore your zealous commending Mr. *Busby*, and (out of my respects to him, notwithstanding his Injuries) wish, that you had not so soon confuted and discredited your own Testimony, by professing in the same Page you do not know him: Nor am I willing to insist upon your great indiscretion, or rather undoing design, that you should so much praise Mr. *Busby*, and yet in the same Book, much more rail at the *Long Parliament*, that is, to mention no more, upon all his *Governours*: Wherein, Sir, you may be thought, not so much to praise Mr. *Busby*, as to discover him; not to set him off, but to lay him open, and to betray him to the suspicion of his Judges, of whose favour he may stand in need. But these things I let pass as Incongruities, which as your haste made you commit, so I hope Mr. *Busby* hath already paid you for them accordingly.

That which I am most concerned to take Notice of, is that prodigious vein of *Wit*, which runs through your Epistle; as when you call me Mr. *Edward*, when you miscall me by the name of *Usher*, and that profound one of *Consigning the sawcy Censor*, which is a Jest that this Year few will understand, and in the next, none can: These, Sir, are the flowers of your Rhetorick, and what the phrases are, I have not had leisure to gather, but may from hence easily be guessed at.

But certainly Sir, Durst we poor despised *Calvinists* take the liberty which you do, as well, or ill to abuse the party we dispute with; or could we think it pious to defend our Cause, not by disarming, but, by disgracing the Adversary,

you

you long ere this had met with that kind of entertainment. But who would not blush and be ashamed to be counted a *Wit*, when you, who have so long laboured to deserve that childish Name, are content to take up with such poor things to credit you. Trust me, Sir, if the goodness of your Pack, may be guessed at by the smallness of the wares you produce, you may be heavily, but you cannot be richly laden; And I would not have your Back, for your Burden. Were I foolish enough to be witty by your example, might not I call you Mr. *Thomas*, or, which is somewhat more answerable to your present Phrenzie, Plain *Tom*? Could not I vilifie you by the Name of *Vicar*? And at last spend some dreadfull Quibbles upon *Pierce*? And I would fain know, Whether such dry bobs as these, would not provoke as much laughter, and, which is your main end, make as good sport among your Lay and Female Readers, as any of those offers at Smartnesse and Satyre, which you have ventured to shew upon me?

As you love, Sir, to preserve that little Credit you have got, I would advise you to put up your Trinkets in time; for your kind of Play with Small money, will not hold out with all sorts of Gamesters. Though I am the meanest of those you have undertaken, yet, if I would take you for my subject, and rather strive to be sharp than serious, I should find it no hard matter, to dress you up in your Cap and Cassock, and so shew you to the world, not like those Innocent Creatures, the *Rats* and *Mice*, to which you have merrily, or rather, to shew what value you put upon your self, triumphantly compared us: But like some greater, and more ravenous Beast of prey, which is not content to nibble at *Books*, but tears and devours the Authors, and when he should confute their Arguments, wounds and assassinate their Reputations.

Were you cool enough, I need go no farther than your self for a testimony to confirm this; for is not this your constant practice? Hastily concluding the truth to be on your

side (as if you had a Priviledge to be infallible) and striding o're the knot, lest it should stop your Career, you get as farre as you can from the Question, and at that distance Bark at your dissenting Brethren, call them all *Fools* and *Madmen*, who dare not be so Peremptory and unreasonable as your self; load them with bitter invectives, and blasphemous Inferences; and what you want in Argument, you make up in Noise and Outcry: Much like that silly *Stoick* in *Lucian* * (an Author I am sure you are Vers'd in, and, because he jeers *Predestination*, well approve of) who when he was driven to a Non plus, cries out *ὦ πατήρ*, which is the very Greek for your English, when you so opprobriously call Mr. *Hickman* *Wretched Caitiff*.

You see, Sir, how much you lie at my Mercy, and from what I have said, you may judge how favourable I am, in that I say no more: Now I have put you into a Fright, and shewed you your danger, I must pity your frailty, and comfort you again, by acquainting you, that I hope I am perfectly cured of that looseness, and what levity I dislike in your writings, I shall not willingly practise in my own; and though it is to be feared, that your Poetry has spoiled your preaching, yet, for your profession's sake, I heartily wish you would a little forget that you are *Rector* of *Brington*, which is your Law Term; that so you may the better remember your self to be a *Preacher* of the *Gospel*, which is your Proper Title, and with the gravity of which, your present empty and trivial way of writing, do's as little agree, as a feather would do with your habit. Much more might be said upon this subject, but I am too young to countenance the good Advice I could give; and you are too old, and too wise too, at least in your own conceit, to take it.

And here, Sir, if you please, we will end all Personal Quarrels; at least for my part I shall, since I cannot think it worth my while there to contend for the victory, where I should be ashamed to Triumph. And that I may not wholly loose this Letter, which I should do if I discoursed of nothing in it but you, I shall conclude with something more
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material, *viz.* the Ground of our former and present difference.

The difference between your self and me, (that you may not be so confident of your own opinion) is neither more nor less, then what has employed the Wits, and divided the Judgments of all the learned men that ever were, or will be in the world, *viz.* concerning *Gods Decrees*, whether they be *Absolute* or *Conditional*. You, in the rear of many great Names which I could reckon, because you cannot otherwise understand the Importance of those several precepts and comminations in Scripture, nor Free God from being the Author of sin, affirm *Gods Decrees* to be *Conditional*, i. e. *That God chooseth Peter, &c. because he foresees that he will Believe and Persevere to the end.* But I, who can as little understand how God can consider any condition in the creature as a ground of his Election, since he is the sole Author of whatever conditions the creature can be supposed to have: And because I understand lesse, how those who acknowledge Gods Prescience can free him from being in some sense the Author of sin, since what ever God foresees, and doth not prevent, he may justly be said to cause, when he knows that nothing but his interposing can hinder the producing of it, therefore I affirm, with many Thousands of others, as Learned men as the World ever had, That all *Gods Decrees* are, like his Nature, *Absolute*, i. e. *That God chooseth Peter, &c. because he will chuse him, and to make good his act of Election, he gives him Faith, and by his power preserves him to the end.*

To understand which of these two opinions be the most sober and Rational (for as to Scripture, the last without dispute has the better) it will be first necessary to consider the Nature of Mans *Will*, in what manner, and how farre 'tis *Free*; and to resolve this, however; Sir, you take the whole for granted, requires a more than ordinary knowledge in the Depths of natural Philosophy; which you have not now leisure, nor ever seem to have had settled judgment enough to enquire into: and therefore it may perhaps be news to tell you that those Axioms, *Nothing can move it self*; and,

Every thing hath a Cause; and, Whatever the will chuseth now, it can give a Reason, why it chuseth it, which Reason was sufficient to move it, and therefore Necessary. These Axioms I say, when urged as Objections, have in all Ages puzzled the most Acute and subtil Disputers; and though many, amongst whom the Reverend and Learned B. Bramhall, have said as much in the point, as the Question is capable of, yet when all is done, I must profess for my own part, that my Religion, and not my Reason, has satisfied me, and I am content to beleive I have Free-will, though I cannot understand it: and concerning this, not as presuming to solve the Difficulties, but only to shew them, I have sent you an Exercitation in Latine, which you may either Answer, or, which is farre more easie, slight as you see occasion.

When this Difficulty is passed over, which alone is enough to choak the keenest Disputers appetite, Another of much greater importance remains behind, *viz.* upon supposition that man has *Free-will*, that is, Liberty to chuse, not his actions only, but his will too (as who is so Mad to deny this, in his Actions I mean, though many do in their writings?) then how can this freedom of Will in man be reconciled to the Absoluteness of the Will of God; since that, as it is the prime Cause, so it does alwayes actually concur with, and therefore is necessarily productive of, every Action of the Creature? To say here that God concurs with every Creature according to their several respective natures, that is to say, with necessary Agents, so as to make them act necessarily; with Free Agents, so as to let them act Freely; this, I humbly conceive, is not so much to untie the knot, as to beg the Question, since Gods concurrence is urged as an Argument to take away all manner of Freedome, because his influence doth Act, though in a secret, yet in an irresistible manner.

These Intricacies, Sir, which do accompany the Question about *Gods Decrees* (not to urge any thing from the consequences of either, which is not a solid nor a rational way of searching out Truth) do make this controversie so unin-

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unintelligible, so almost incapable of Solution, that they did at first disquiet, but at last, through the blessing of God, they drove me out of the fluctuations of Reason, into the Shelter and Sanctuary of the Apostle *Paul*: and that Question of his, *Who art thou, O man*, &c? I have experimentally found to be the most effectual charm, wherewith to compose and settle a soul in the midst of its shakings. From thence I did resolve, and hope shall ever be preserved in the same mind, to acquiesce in the Letter of Scripture, in spite of all the Tumultuatings and Agitations of my Thoughts against it; for should I ever let go my hold, and put out to Sea again, I have just Cause to Fear, that this depth will sooner swallow me up, than be Fathomed by me. You did therefore, Sir, very Prudently, to slight my late Treatise upon this Subject, and at all adventure to stile it *weak* and *Shallow*, that thereby you might discourage your Followers, from receiving thence that satisfaction, which none of your Thin and Aairy Discourses can give them.

But I will not again repeat, what I before mentioned, and promised to Forgive you for, concerning your Raw and Unseasoned way of Arguing; but I appeal to the Consciences of all the Sober men of your Perswasion, whether the Doubts in Prescience will not as much Perplex a Disputing Christian, as the Mysteries of Predestination; and if you indeed have escaped those Plunges, if you alone have been altogether Freed from those Entanglements, I dare pronounce, it is not because you are Wiser, or understand *Boetius** better than other men, but because you have not Patience, I might say Depth, enough, to take in the whole compass of your Tenet.

* *S. I. de
consol. Phil.*

Thus, Sir, I have briefly discovered my own Opinion, and withall pointed you out a way how you may correct yours; and if not your Opinion, yet at least your Temper; which if you shall observe, there is some hope, that there may be, if not a Friendly agreement, yet a fair and Scholar-like contention between us: In Order to which, I shall, whenever you please, undertake to Maintain these two Theses.

1^o. *That all Gods Decrees are Absolute.*

2^o. *That the Arminians, I mean those who assert Conditional Election, do as much make God the Author of Sin, as those who hold it to be Absolute.*

These two Positions, Sir, contain the Substance of all that either is, or can be, said in this Argument, and if in either of them, you please, suitably to your declared Doctrine, to hold the Negative, the Controversie may come to a speedy Issue; if you please withall briefly to State your Opinion, and, without impertinent Declaiming by the By (with which you may please, but never satisfie a curious Reader) give in the Reasons of your Assertion. Upon the view of vvhich, if I find your Arguments so New, so Clear, and so Convincing, that I, though far the vveakest of your Adversaries, cannot Answer them; I shall, notwithstanding Our present Distances, forthwith become, something more than your Friend, your Convert, and endeavour to draw in others by my Example. And, because I foresee I am not like to make this change in haste, you shall however always find me,

Sir,

Your very humble and Ready Servant

Ch. Cb.
Aug. 1^o. 1659.

Edm. Bagshawe.



Exercitatio Philosophica de Libero Arbitrio.

Nihil est quod magis hominem commendet quam Arbitrii Libertas; nihil tamen de quo Philosophi minus consensere; Siquidem ut Taciti verbis utar, *fuere semper, qui Fatum congruere rebus putarent, licet non è vagis stellis, sed apud principia & nexus naturalium causarum, primo cuiusque ortu ventura destinantur.*

Annal. lib.
6.

Opinio ista de Fato vel inevitabili rerum omnium eventu, sive a *Chaldeis*, uti placet *Diodoro Siculo*, sive ab aliis orta, a *Stoicis* avidè arrepta est, & ita demum propagata, ut istius Sectæ habita sit Nota propemodum peculiaris; quæ alii Fortuita, illi Necessaria vocant; nec incidere ea, sed venire aiunt, certâque, licet inobservabili, lege decurrere. Hinc *Seneca*, Scio, inquit, *omnia certâ & in æternum dictâ lege decurrere; Fata nos ducunt, & quantum cuique restat, prima nascentis hora disposuit: Caela pendet ex Causâ privata & publica longus ordo rerum trahit.* Unde *Chrysippus* Ἐμαρμένον sive *Fatum*, definit esse αὐτοὺν αἰσίων τῶν ὅλων, ἐξ αἰδῆ τῶν ἐπακολουθειῶν, ἀναγκαῖον καὶ ἀμεταβέβητον εἶναι τῆς τοιαύτης συμφορῆς—h. e. *Fatum est invariabilis rerum compages, sic concatenata ut dissolvi alterarique non possit.* Eodem facit illa *Homeri* Ζεὺς χρυσεία, sive *Aurea Catena*, quæ omnia sic a Deo pendere facit, ut continuo imperceptoque nexu ab Ipso ad nos usque pertingant; adeo ut licet nunquam non agamus liberè, videamurque, saltem nobis ipsis, Actionum nostrarum undequaque Domini;

Lib. 2.

Lib. de
Provid.

Apud A.
Gel.

mini; nunquam tamen inquirunt, quicquam sic libenter facimus, ut non prius illud idem collibuerit Deo; nec plus minùve operari est, quam ille olim decreverit. Imo tam rigidè hâc ex parte egêrunt Stoici, ut nec Diis ipsis ullam reliquerint Libertatem: Sic enim omnium nomine proclamat *Seneca*--*Eadem necessitas & Nos & Deos alligat; irrevocabilis divina pariter & Humana cursus vebit; ille ipse omnium Conditor & Rector, Scripsit quidem Fata, sed sequitur; semel iussit, semper parci; unde & Lucanus non tantum* Poeticè de Deo loquens

*Scripsit in aeternum causas, quâ cuncta coerces,
Se quoque lege tenens--*

Numen scilicet Decreto suo dum stat, videtur parere; quia aliàs confessio erroris fuerit, si mutanda fecerit.

Sen. Oed. Act. 5.

Fatis agimur;--

Quicquid patimur mortale Genus,

Quicquid facimus, venit ex alto:

Non illa Deo vertisselicet

Quæ nexa suis currunt causis.

Cum vero nôrint multa passim provenire malâ, quorum aliqua facimus ipsi, aliqua & patimur; a Bono autem Deo omnem Malignitatis suspicionem sollicitè amoverint; Malorum itaque omnium Originem Materiæ ascripserunt, quam vagam & Inconditis Motibus ultrò aberrantem coerceri & in ordinem redigi non posse autmârunt, sed Tumultu irregulari abreptam Pestes spargere, vitia accendere, ruinam undique moliri, seque quasi contagii vastationisque fomitem ubique insinuare; uti *Seneca*, a magno, inquit, *artifice formati prava multa, non quia cessat ars, sed quia id, in quo exercetur, inobsequens Arti est; & explicatiùs alibi, quærens*

Lib. 2.
Quest.
Natur.

Lib. 2.

Quest.
Nat. 1.

quærens cur Deus Bonis Tristitia immittat, respondet, *Artifex non solet mutare Materiam; hæc passa est.*

Concesso autem, singula Fato volvi, nec Actionem ullam, ut ut Levem ac Minutam, extra præscriptum olim ordinem edi posse, cum inde promptum foret obijcere, neminem tum ob Probitatem laudandum, nec ob vitia culpandum quempiam (nullo etemin encomio dignus est is, qui Probitati, quam habet, succumbit potius quam studet; nec illius malitia seriò detestanda est, qui nequitia, cui resistere non potest, securus fruitur) hujusmodi Instantiis occurrit *Manilius*, innuendo istam doctrinam non liberare pænâ nocentem, nec præmio merentem fraudare; sed potius virtutis valorem, vitii enormitatem intendere: tanto enim impensius, inquit, laudandus est Probus--

Astrom.
lib. 4.

*Quod calo gaudente venit, rursusque nocentes
Oderimus magis in panam culpamque creatos.*

Uti enim nemo escam minus probaverit, licet sapor ejus non suâ sponte sed irresistibili Naturæ vi, gratus proveniat; nec noxias lethalesque herbas minus refugimus, licet succum suum aliunde trahere cogantur, nec ultrò fiunt mortifetæ; sic & cum Hominiibus agendum censer, quorum Probitas si Deo ac Fato imputetur, gratulandum est iis, quod propriori eos curâ numen dignetur; si vero Mali Sceleratique sint, non culpâ suâ sed Fati Perversitate, eo sunt culpandi magis, quod jam olim Diis exosi, in terras veniunt quasi damnati.

Atque Stoicorum Doctrinæ de Fato & Necessitate hæc ferè Summa est.

Peripatetici autem & Platonici, paulò humiliùs, & ad vulgarem captum accommodatiùs, Philolophati, cum observarent *Ἀυτεξέστων* illud sive *Liberum Arbitrium*, & in Legibus Præsumi, & Notitiis Hominum ita Naturaliter infigi, ut citiùs quis sensum illis, quam Electionem extorserit; hinc etiam & Illi huic Opinioni consensêrunt, quam, præterquàm quòd in Religione omni sit persuasissima, argumentis insuper a Ratione ductis, confirmare sunt annixi.

Primò Arguunt ex Animantium Divisione, quorum quidam spontaneo & cæco impetu feruntur, Acti potiùs quam Agentes; alii autem, suo arbitratu perpenfis priùs & examinatis rerum agendarum circumstantiis, vel faciunt vel omittunt consulta prout ipsis libitum fuerit. Qualis est omnium hominum Natura, qui, nisi isto privilegio gauderent, Brutis forent longè infeliciores; cum, iisdem necessitatibus constricti sint, legibus tamen parere cogantur, quasi Liberi.

Cum autem instarent Stoici, omnino eos qui consultant, id approbare solum quod ipsis placet, & proinde videri etiam Homines rapi visis æquè ac cætera Animalia, licet aliquantò lentius consentiant; respondent, eum, qui consilio ductus imaginatione visorum percelli videatur, non servum idèò sed Dominum dicendum; cum, si voluerit, in alteram partem consensisse poterat; quisquis enim, inquit, ob collectionem, quam apud se consultans facit, aliquid approbet, reputandus est ipse sibi istius Approbationis causa. Quæ *Alexandri Aphrodisæi* defensio est apud *Eusebium*.

Deinde cum urgerentur isto Effato, Deus prænovit omnia,

omnia, ergo certò *i. e.* destinatio eveniunt; vel enim Numen nullam habet de rebus dubiis perceptionem, quod probabile non est ut Author nesciret motus conatusque Creaturæ, quam ipse produxit; vel cognitionem habet certam & infallibilem, adeoque res illæ, quas eventuras præscivit, inevitabiliter *h. e.* Necessariò & fato cogente producentur.

Cum isto potissimum Argumento se munirent Stoici, respondebant Platonici, verum quidem esse quod Deus omnia prænoverit; atqui cum quædam Necessariò quædam fortuitò eveniant, proinde Deum præscire Necessaria certò; reliqua, prout ipsorum Natura erat, scilicet ut Dubia & Indeterminata; nempe, inquit, si Deus id quod dubium Ancepsque est, certò sciret, falleretur; quia Dubium id est quod fortè non continget; itaque cum Futura Ancipitia talem præfensionem non admittant, ne Dii quidem ipsi credi debent nosse, quæ nosci nequeant; atque Hunc in modum respondent *Chalcidius*^a, *Plotinus*^b, *Ammonius*^c, *Tyrius* alique; imo non Philosophi solum, sed eodem responso se tueantur hodiè quotquot^d Theologi inconcessam sibi, veluti è Dei manibus, extorquent Libertatem.

^a Ia Timæum.
^b Enn. lib. I.
^c meæ ep. univ. c. 9.
^d Socinus Crellius, &c.

Denique cum instarent Stoici voluntatem Humanam, si non Appetitûs actu abripiatur, semper tamen Intellectûs imperio duci, cum Rationis dictata nunquam non sequatur; & proinde non magis Libera censenda sit, quam ille non habendus est captivus, qui nunquam foras exit nisi addito custode.

Huic Instantiæ variè respondent Platonici,

I. Fatendo voluntatem ab Intellectu moveri & allici semper, at nunquam cogi. Cum enim voluntas sit cæca Potentia, q̃i, facis instar, præluceat Ratio, nè, cum

omnia liberè possit, quædam etiam & malè faciat; atque eo, funestissimo licet argumento, libertatem suam maximè prodat Anima, quod quandocunque lubet, imperio Rationis reniti queat. Hinc querela illa.

—*Video meliora proboque*

Deteriora sequor—omnibus quotidie in ore est Fatalis adeo & noxia Libertas, vel ex erroribus nostris, & quod quædam mala quasi nolentes facimus, comprobatur.

2. Respondent urgendo Incommoda quæ Stoicam istam Necessitatem sequantur, nempe

1. Si Homo ad Actiones suas vi aliquâ ita impelleretur, ut omittere eas ipsi liberum non fuerit, cur Trophæa victoribus, victis solatia conquirimus? quorsum Præmia Pænæque? cui usui inserviunt encomia & vituperia? quis enim illum laudabit improbabitve, quem stimuli & flagra in facinus præcipitavêre? Benè scilicet non agunt, qui aliter agere non possunt: Nemo naudem celeri & æquabili cursu immensum æquor pervolantem, ideo laudabit, quòd Magistro dirigente & Ferente vento unâ feratur; & aliquândo Pelagi minis, nescia obtemperet. Majore encomio non est dignanda virtus, quam ignari recipimus; & fato impressam signatamque animo Probitatem non magis jactaremus, quam equus Phaleras.

Cur itidem Malos castigamus, aut supplicia decernimus iis qui legem violant, quam, nisi fata velint, observare non possint; nemo Hirci nequitiam, aut violentiam Tauri punivit; si abstineant Bruta, in istam Probitatem ducuntur, quasi captiva: sin peccent, non est istorum sed Naturæ error. Innocens planè est quem necessitas excusat, & ille quem ad scelera præ-

finivit Fatum, Infælix dici potest, non Improbus: Quæso qui, ut de Brutis taceam, a stipite vel saxo differremus Homines, si ita essemus comparati; Inanimata quæque motorem nata moventur; nimirum & gravis Terra projicitur, & iners saxum, si manum adhibeas, in Gyrum rotatur: Sic & Homo, si Actiones non suas edat, sed necessitate motus operetur, nihil videtur esse aliud, quam paulò agilior & magis versatilis Fabrica.

Concludunt itaque animam Humanam Privilegiis suis & Honore natalitio privari, nisi regat corpus; corpus autem illa regere non potest, nisi in seipsam habeat Imperium, juxta illud carmen

Sit liber, Dominus qui velit esse.

Atque sic ferè pro Arbitrii Libertate arguunt Platonici. Et si quis controversiam illam plenius examinare velit, legat eximias utrinque dissertationes *R. P. Bramhalli* affirmantis, & *Th. Hobbesi*, plus quàm Stoicè, negantis Libertatem.

Quod ad me attinet, etsi è sacrâ Scripturâ edoctus sciam quid Christiano tenendum sit, nempe unumquemque liberè velle malum & liberè nolle bonum, quæ sola nobis miseris jam demùm restat libertas; tamen si omnino Philosophicè agendum sit, non dubitaverim affirmare Libertate Absolutâ & Plenâ nihil esse vel quod magis credam, vel quod minus probari posse putem: Cum enim omnia quæ videmus, ex causis certis determinatisque oriantur & fiant, unicam voluntatem Humanam istâ lege eximere videtur planè iniquum.

1. Quia ut detur aliquid, quod seipsum moveat idque propriâ vi, cogitatu prorsus impossibile est.

2. Quod nemo non advertat, & si rogetur, rationem reddere.

reddere queat, cur hoc potius quam illud eligat : causa autem illa qualiscunque, quæ voluntatem sive impellit sive inclinât, perinde facit Actionem Necessariam.

Ultimò quod quomodo Libertas humana cum Præscientiâ divinâ consistat, salvo utriusque jure, explicare adhuc nemo poterit; quicquid enim certo prænosçitur, ut eveniat necesse est, non quasi ipsa Præscientia magis quam scientia, quicquam ad movendam voluntatem contribuat, sed quod Causæ istæ, è quarum cognitione Præscientiæ certitudo & Infallibilitas dependet, effectum præcognitum necessariò & inevitabiliter producent.

Alia sunt quæ obijci possunt verùm cùm Libertate sublatâ, simul & virtus pereat; cum Pietas & Politia omnis unâ concidant; & præterea cum nemo non experiatur se, quando velit, non actionem modo sed & voluntatem immutare posse; refragetur licet ratio scrupulosque injiciat, nemo tamen vereatur asserere sibi eam, cujus vim quotidie sentit & actionem exferit, Arbitrii Libertatem.

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